

New Approaches to Modeling the Global Arms Industry

Richard A. Bitzinger, S.Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Singapore

It is generally argued that the global arms industry is hierarchical and pyramidal, with a few advanced arms suppliers occupying the upper strata, and larger numbers of less-advanced supplier-states occupying progressively lower levels. However, there may be different ways to model the global structure of the arms industry, taking into account niche producers (who can offer relatively highly advanced weapons systems in various "core competencies"), large, mid-tech but steadily improving arms producers (e.g., China and India), and so forth. Moreover, the pyramidal model offers only a static view (a snapshot, as it were), which fails to capture the dynamic nature of the international defense industry. This paper attempts to lay out possible new approaches to taxonomize the global arms industry, and to also try and synthesize a unified model of a global arms industry.